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University President statement on social media posts by UMaine College Republicans

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Office of the President

Community Message: October 7

October 8, 2019 [President's Messages](#)

To the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias communities:

We are writing to provide the University of Maine position on recent Facebook posts by the UMaine College Republicans on their private Facebook page.

The positions reflected and reposted on that page are neither supported by nor reflective of the University of Maine's values and principles of inclusivity and equity.

For those of you who are not aware, the Facebook post uses 15th-century Spanish war propaganda to dehumanize indigenous peoples, implying all indigenous peoples of the Americas are brutal savages.

We fully understand that this sort of material is upsetting to many members of our community, and it does not align with our values or the stated values of the university.

UMaine is a community brought together in our differences, and some of our most highly held values are civility, inclusion, compassion, understanding and respect. When those values are called into question by the words or actions of others, the reverberations are real and widely felt.

The best remedy for speech we do not like or disagree with is more speech, and many are expressing their feelings to us and perhaps even on Facebook. We are asking faculty, staff and students to discuss these matters with each other, and to weigh in on these important discussions. Student Life will be co-hosting group discussions with Student Government on the roots of Indigenous Peoples Day, and free speech as a community ideal. That is essential if we are to be engaged and working to make change in our society.

We recognize how painful and frustrating it is to have to repeatedly defend our values of community and respect, but we are confident that our many voices will join together on Monday to celebrate the historic, cultural and contemporary significance of indigenous people across Maine.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
President of the University of Maine and its regional campus, the University of Maine at Machias

Robert Q. Dana
Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students